Import of wheat		
Year	Country	Quantity (in lakh tones)
1997-98	Australia	10.18
1998-99	Australia	14.15
1999-2000	Nil	Nil

There has been no commercial export of wheat on Government account during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998—99. During 1999-2000 a meagre quantity of 906 MTs of wheat has been lifted by the authorised nomineee of the Government of Nepal against 50,000 MTs, Allocated to Nepal.

Poor quality of commodities at FPS

913. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the poor quality of ration items and sugar available in Fair Price Shops; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to improve the quality of ration items particularly rice, wheat and sugar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI

SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The stocks of foodgrains and sugar strictly conforming to the specifications laid down by the Government of India are issued by the FCI to the State Governments or their authorised representatives for distribution under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) through Fair Price Shops (FPS). The representatives of the state Governments are allowed to inspect the quality of foodgrains before lifting from FCI godowns.

(b) No, Sir.

However, with a view to improve the quality of foodgrains being distributed through PDS, the following steps have been taken:

(i) The specifications of rice during current kharif marketing season (1999-2000) have been tightened.

(ii) Instructions have been issued to all state Governments that officers not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed for joint inspection of foodgrain stocks before lifting from FCI godowns.

Policy for the Picking Sandstones

†914. SHRI MANOHAR KANT DHYANI: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1010, given in Rajya Sabha on the 10th December, 1999 and state:

(a) whether any policy would be framed by the Centre for picking (Tipan) of sandstones dropped by various hilly rivers of more than three hundred kilometers length in the mountainous regions; and

(b) whether same kind of pointing would be provided in these mountainous areas, as in foothill areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) No, Sir. There is already provision in the Forest

† Original Notice of the Question was received in Hindi.